

Five Ways to Wellbeing – A Whole School Approach

Wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or illness. It's a combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors.

Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. Wellbeing could be described as how you feel about yourself and your life.

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps that can improve mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. Using these steps can help children and adults feel more positive and able to get the most out of life



Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

Good relationships are important for mental wellbeing. They can:

- help to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- give an opportunity to share positive experiences
- provide emotional support and allow people to support others

Ideas to try in school



Children

- 'Morning Greeters' at the gate, who stand alongside teachers welcoming children into school to start each day with a smile
- 'Be Nice to someone New' campaign to promote connecting.
- 'Being in someone else's shoes project': helping children to understand and relate to differences
- Empathy project: encouraging students to connect more with people they don't know
- 'Five minute Friendship' – like speed dating, children are encouraged to talk to new people.
- Have a Buddy Stop / Playground Buddies / Playground Pals
- Have a 'WOW Wednesday!' lunch time club with a different game/activity each week. The Ambassadors will demonstrate the game/activity and then encourage others who are feeling 'left out' or not sure what to do at lunch time to join in
- Implement a 'Worry Box' system each classroom which is checked on a weekly basis.
- Have a 'feelings' box

Staff

Give staff the opportunity to talk about any of their problems with:

- Drop in clinics
- A box in the staffroom for staff to anonymously place their ideas/concerns/worries/views
- Ensure staff are of services/information around health and wellbeing through emails and displays

Parents/Carers

- Use newsletters and school website to signposting families to services, training, health information and activities.
- Run a parents coffee morning through the CAMHS mental health school team link worker and invite external agencies, local services and guest speakers along to offer further support
- Use the Parent Evaluation Forms to capture parental feedback about wellbeing in your school
- Provide a wellbeing email address for parents who want to raise any issues



Ideas to try at home

Children

- If you're at home with your family, try to eat lunch or dinner at the same time - this can be much more fun than all eating separately and gives you an opportunity to chat.
- Stay in touch with your friends - you might not be able to see them right now, but you can still speak on the phone. Hearing someone's voice can be much nicer than just sending a message
- Talk about your feelings. It is important you don't bottle your feelings up. Talking Shows Strength
- Listen. If a friend or family member wants to talk to you. Make sure you listen and give them your full attention - remember to ask the question "How are you?"

Staff/Parents/Carers

- If possible, take time each day to be with your family, for example, try arranging a fixed time to eat dinner together
- Arrange a day out with friends you have not seen for a while
- Try switching off the TV to talk or play a game with your children, friends or family
- Have lunch with a colleague
- Visit a friend or family member who needs support or company
- Volunteer at a local school, hospital or community group. Find out how to volunteer on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk)
- Make the most of technology to stay in touch with friends and family. Video-chat apps like Skype and FaceTime are useful, especially if you live far apart

Be Active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

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Evidence also shows it can also improve mental wellbeing by:

- raising self-esteem
- helping to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- Causing chemical changes in the brain which can help to positively change mood.

Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being

Ideas to try in school



Children

- Sports Leaders leading active play during lunchtime such as: football, hula-hooping, skipping and den building
- Run a 'Be Active' day, including activities such as dance, an obstacle course and a treasure hunt
- 'Get active' monthly fun day with sporting activities
- Create a gardening club
- Have yoga sessions during school time
- Walk/cycle to school competitions

Staff

- Promote wellbeing activities like yoga, mindfulness, Pilates or tai chi for calming exercise
- Fitness classes like Zumba, circuit training, tramlining for high impact and less vigorous activities such as gardening and walking

Parents/ Carers

- Parents newsletters/ website to include activities and events happening in the local area to encourage family participation



Ideas to try at home

Children

- Dance to some music that you enjoy listening to – making up dance routines is fun and keeps you active
- If you have a garden, play a game outside - skipping, star jumps, keepy- uppy or if exercise is not your thing, why not start a little gardening project
- Hoovering, sweeping up and housework is a great way to be active and to help out your family.
- There other physical activities you can do on line from home visit:
<https://sportinherts.org.uk/physical-activity-for-wellbeing/workoutfromhome/>

Staff/Parents/Carers

- Find free activities to help you get fit
- If you have a disability or long-term health condition, find out about getting active with a disability
- Start running with the couch to 5k podcasts
- Find out how to start swimming, cycling or dancing
- Find out about getting started with exercise

Take Notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm life priorities.

Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help people enjoy life more and understand themselves better. It can positively change the way someone feels about life and how they approach challenges

Ideas to try in school



Children

- Put a range of prompt questions/pictures up around school to encourage children and adults to take notice of others emotions such as: can you find someone who needs a helping hand today?
 - Run mindfulness where children can spend some time colouring, listening to music and making posters to display on the Wellbeing Board. Other mindfulness activities can include:
 - Mindful breathing
 - Mindful movement
 - Mindful listening
 - Mindful eating
- A room to go to where you can calm down and work through tough emotions / distress
- Play relaxing music at lunchtime
 - Have a gratitude jar in classroom

Staff

- Have a gratitude jar for the staffroom and share at staff meetings
- Signpost to mindfulness apps such as Head Space
- Encourage staff to do mini mindfulness exercises in their break times such as 3 mindful breaths



Children

- Draw a picture of something in your house or garden, or something you can see through your window.
- Do an online meditation – you could even do this as a whole family.
- Here are some to try - www.headspace.com/meditation/kids
- Listen to some music you enjoy – why not sing along too. Have think about what it is you really like about each song you play.
- If you're feeling anxious, try some deep breathing. Breathe in to the count of 3, hold for the count of 3, and then breathe out to the count of 3. Repeat ten times. It can help to visualise each stage as one side of a triangle.

Staff

- Read more about mindfulness, including steps you can take to be more mindful in your everyday life.
- You can watch this short [mindful breathing exercise video on YouTube](#) from Every Mind Matters.

Keep Learning

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. The practice of setting goals has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Research shows that learning new skills can also improve mental wellbeing by:

- boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- helping build a sense of purpose
- helping to connect with others

Ideas to try in school



Children

- Encourage children to learn a new skill in their own time and to send in photos of them doing so
- Learn new words that relate to wellbeing
- Keep Learning – teacher reward and acknowledgement when children are using the 5 Ways

Staff

- Ensure staff are aware of training opportunities both internal and external
- Source emotional wellbeing and mental/ physical health workshops
- Encourage opportunities for staff to take on a new responsibility at work, such as mentoring a junior staff member or improving a skill such as e.g. presentation skills

Parents/carers

Place helpful webinars and free local workshop opportunities on school website

Children

- Why not try a new hobby from home such as arts, crafts, knitting or photography.
- Read a book with a parent/carer – every book will teach us something new and will improve wellbeing.
- Learn something new – it could be a magic trick, a new dance move, or even a few simple phrases like counting to ten in another language

Staff/Parents/Carers

- Try learning to cook something new.
- Work on a DIY project, such as fixing a broken bike, garden gate or something bigger. There are lots of free video tutorials online.
- Consider signing up for a course at a local college. You could try learning a new language or a practical skill such as plumbing.
- Try new hobbies that challenge you, such as writing a blog, taking up a new sport or learning to paint

Ideas to try at home



Give

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

Acts of giving and kindness can help improve mental wellbeing by:

- creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- giving a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- helping connect with other people

Ideas to try in school



Children

- Promote a local environmental projects which the school is supporting
- Supporting local charities and events
- Monthly thank you notes to children and parents

Staff

- Showing staff appreciation with wellbeing gestures
- Introduce a staff 'shout out' board for any kind of praise, thanks or good practice
- Try a 'staff applause' system whereby staff are nominated and publicly praised for their hard work and commitment
- Send appreciation cards

Children

- Now is a great time to help around the house – you could tidy your room; help do the hoovering or pull out some weeds in the garden if you have one
- Draw or paint a picture for someone in your family - everyone loves receiving a handmade picture, you'll be able to put a smile on their face
- If you have a pet, spend some time with them - give them a fuss if they like being fussed.
- Write a poem for someone you love – you could then read it to them over the phone to brighten their day
- Say something nice to someone you live with – perhaps they look nice today, or they've done something for you that you could thank them for

Staff/Parents/ Carers

- Saying thank you to someone for something they have done for you
- Asking friends or family how they are and really listening to their answer
- Spending time with friends or relatives who need support or company
- Offering to help someone you know with DIY or a work project
- Volunteering in your community, such as helping at a school, hospital or care home

Ideas to try at home

